

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 4970
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32232-0019
January 27, 1998

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF
Planning Division
Environmental Branch

FOR THE RECORD
Director
Command & Administration
Engineering
Environmental
Information Management
Inspection & Maintenance
Legal, City & Town
Construction
Copy 13

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A. W. [Signature]
C. [Signature]

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), is gathering information to define issues and concerns that will be addressed in the environmental restoration of Peanut Island in Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida. Authority and funding are provided by Section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996. An Initial Appraisal Report determined there is Federal interest in the project. This resulted in the undertaking of an Environmental Restoration Report that is currently underway.

It is the intent of the Corps, to prepare an Environmental Assessment for the environmental restoration of Peanut Island in Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida. Exotic vegetation will be removed and a more natural and native landscape will be constructed on the man-made island of dredged material. Peanut Island is owned by the Port of Palm Beach with a lease hold to the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) for the storage of dredged material. The Port of Palm Beach has a designated disposal site on the island also. The U.S. Coast Guard also occupies the southeast corner of the island.

Palm Beach County has requested the Corps' assistance in removing exotic vegetation and creating a 9.1 acre maritime hammock, removing exotic vegetation and excavating tidal channels for the establishment of 3.5 acres of mangrove habitat, and the construction of a 1 acre shallow water reef with a breakwater. The maritime hammock (enclosure 2) will be located on the island's western and eastern island areas to provide habitat for migrating and local birdlife. Two existing isolated mangrove areas on the island's western side will be joined and improved with the construction of tidal channels (enclosure 1). Intertidal marshgrass (*Spartina* spp.) will also be planted to help prevent erosion and provide additional habitat for breeding and feeding wildlife. The shallow-water reef is proposed on the southeastern corner of the island (enclosure 1) next to the Lake Worth Inlet Channel. The reef will provide larvae transported in the channel a place to settle and grow.

JAN 29 1998

Please assist the Corps in planning and evaluating the possible environmental impacts of the proposed project. We welcome your views , comments, and information about the resources, study objectives, and important features within the described study area, as well as suggested improvements to the island environment. Letters of comment or inquiry should be directed within thirty (30) days of the date of this letter to the letterhead address, attention Planning Division, Environmental Branch.

Sincerely,


John R. Hall, Acting Chief
Planning Division

Enclosures



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Sandra B. Mortham
Secretary of State
DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

February 9, 1998

Ms. Cherie Trainor
State Clearinghouse
Department of Community Affairs
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2100

In Reply Refer To:
Frank J. Keel
Historic Preservation Planner
Project File No. 980611

RE: Cultural Resource Assessment Request
SAI# 9801280034C
Environmental Restoration of Peanut Island
Palm Beach County, Florida

RECEIVED
FEB 12 1998

Dear Ms. Trainor:

State of Florida Clearinghouse

In accordance with the procedures contained in 36 C.F.R., Part 800 ("Protection of Historic Properties"), as well as the provisions contained in Chapter 267.061, *Florida Statutes*, we have reviewed the above referenced project(s) for possible impact to archaeological and historical sites or properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places, or otherwise of historical or architectural value.

A review of our records indicates that the National Register eligible Kennedy Bunker and Coast Guard Station are located on Peanut Island. However, it is the opinion of this agency that the proposed undertaking will have no effect on the historic significance or character of the structures. The proposed project is also consistent with the historic preservation laws of Florida's Coastal Management Program

If you have any questions concerning our comments, please do not hesitate to contact us. Your interest in protecting Florida's historic properties is appreciated.

Sincerely,

George W. Percy

for

George W. Percy, Director
Division of Historical Resources
and
State Historic Preservation Officer

GWP/Kfk

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

R.A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250 • (850) 488-1480
FAX: (850) 488-3353 • WWW Address <http://www.dos.state.fl.us>

☐ ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH
(850) 487-2299 • FAX: 414-2207

☒ HISTORIC PRESERVATION
(850) 487-2333 • FAX 922-0496

☐ HISTORICAL MUSEUMS
(850) 488-1484 • FAX: 921-2503



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**

Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

February 26, 1998

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
Mr. John R. Hall, Acting Chief
Planning Division
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

Dear Mr. Hall:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed your notice of intent dated January 27, 1998, regarding the Corps of Engineers proposal to prepare an environmental assessment for the environmental restoration of Peanut Island in Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida.

The proposed restoration project includes constructing of a 9.1 acre maritime hammock, removing exotic vegetation, excavating tidal channels for the establishment of 3.5 acres of mangrove habitat, and constructing of a 1.0 acre shallow water reef habitat. The NMFS supports this restoration effort and believes the project will have a positive impact to living marine resources.

A NMFS ecologist conducted an on-site inspection of the project site. The project site is excellent in terms of fishery recruitment potential and water quality because it is located at the Lake Worth Inlet. The project design should maximize this potential by providing as much tidally influenced habitat as possible, perhaps increasing the mangrove or tidal creek habitats. Also, there is possibility that the proposed tidal creeks may recruit and support seagrasses. Therefore, any project modifications that would result in additional seagrass habitat are desirable.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the project and look forward to the draft environmental assessment when it becomes available. If there are questions regarding these comments please contact Mr. John Iliff of our Panama City Office in Miami at 305/595-8352.

Sincerely,

Andreas Mager, Jr.
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division



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South Florida Water Management District

3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406 • (561) 686-8800 • FL WATS 1-800-432-2045
TDD (561) 697-2574

GOV 04-12 RF: 98080

February 20, 1998

Ms. Keri Akers
Florida State Clearinghouse
Florida Department of Community Affairs
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100

RECEIVED
FEB 23 1998

State of Florida Clearinghouse

Dear Ms. Akers:

Subject: Proposed Environmental Restoration of Peanut Island (SAI #9801280034C)

In response to your request, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has reviewed the Scoping Letter submitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in connection with the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the above-referenced project. Although the proposed plan has the potential to significantly improve the existing environmental condition of Peanut Island and provide the public with increased recreational opportunities, additional information is necessary for staff to evaluate the consistency of this project with the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) and our Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) rules and criteria. After review of the Scoping Letter, staff has the following comments:

- (1) On October 10, 1996, the SFWMD issued an Individual Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) to Palm Beach County (Permit No. 50-03713-P) for the construction and operation of a surface water management system on Peanut Island. The permit authorized the construction of various recreational improvements, including a bulkhead, a fishing pier, dredging for barge access, buildings, and roads. The proposed plan appears to vary from the plan permitted by the SFWMD. Consequently, the proposed plan may require a modification to Permit No. 50-03713-P.
- (2) The following issues should be addressed in the preparation of the EA:
 - (a) Will the flushing channel impact existing wetlands?
 - (b) Will the flushing channel be used as a boat basin? If so, how deep is the basin and what size boats will it accommodate? Will this basin replace the previously permitted barge access area? How does the previously permitted dredge area relate to this proposal? Water quality could be a concern, depending upon how this area is designed. Hydrographic modeling may be necessary to assess this potential impact.

Governing Board:

Frank Williamson, Jr., Chairman
Eugene K. Pettis, Vice Chairman
Mitchell W. Berger

Vera M. Carter
William E. Graham
William Hammond

Richard A. Machek
Michael D. Minton
Miriam Singer

Samuel E. Poole III, Executive Director
Michael Slayton, Deputy Executive Director

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 24680, West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680

Ms. Keri Akers
February 20, 1998
Page 2

- (c) How will the shallow reef be constructed? Is any excavation proposed? Will rock or other similar material be deposited to create a reef? Reasonable assurances need to be provided that navigational hazards will not be created and that adequate flushing will be provided to prevent water quality problems.
- (3) Prior to preparation of the EA, the applicant should contact John Meyer in our Natural Resource Management Division at (561) 687-6773 to ensure that all SFWMD concerns are addressed.

If I can be of further assistance, please give me a call at (561) 687-6862.

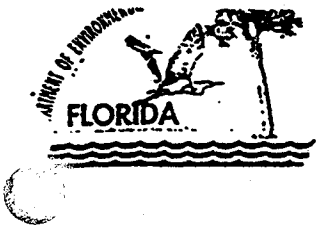
Sincerely,



James J. Golden, AICP
Senior Planner
Regulation Department

/jg

c: John R. Hall, USACOE



Department of Environmental Protection

Lawton Chiles
Governor

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

Virginia B. Wetherell
Secretary

March 9, 1998

RECEIVED
MAR 12 1998

Ms. Cherie Trainor
Florida State Clearinghouse
Department of Community Affairs
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2100

State of Florida Clearinghouse

Re: Department of the Army Scoping letter to Gather Information Defining Issues and Concerns for Restoration of Peanut Island in Lake Worth, Palm Beach County

SAI: FL9801280034C

Dear Ms. Trainor:

This Department has reviewed the above-described project proposal and based on the information provided, request that the following environmental concerns be considered in the Environmental Assessment of the project.

Manatees frequent this area due to plentiful seagrasses and a thermal refuge in close proximity; therefore, the Environmental Assessment should include a thorough review of manatee data and literature to help guide design decisions for this restoration project. Also, it is recommended that a seagrass survey be accomplished in the area to determine where potential impacts might occur from any proposed activities on the Island, such as the mooring or docking of boats, or by increased opportunities for swimming and snorkeling. The use of mooring buoys may be desirable to minimize habitat disruption.

This agency would discourage proposed developments which would reduce the amount of seagrasses available to manatees, or which would jeopardize their existence by unimpeded boating visits to the island. When there is sufficient information of the plan for use of the Island, our Bureau of Protected Species will be able to provide more specific recommendations for manatee protection. That office is willing to assist the applicant in preparing the environmental assessment by providing data on manatee use patterns in Palm Beach County.

It has been reported that this site is currently congested with an estimated 1,000 boats within a 2 mile radius. Additional boating activity could severely hinder navigation in the immediate vicinity. The Intracoastal Waterway channel passes very close to the west side

"Protect, Conserve and Manage Florida's Environment and Natural Resources"

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FL9801280034C

March 9, 1998

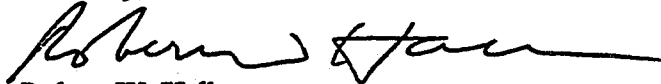
page 2

of the Island and with an alternate channel on the east side that is heavily used by local boat traffic. To the south is the main Port channel and turning basin. Additional structures and boat traffic will serve to exacerbate a navigation hazard which already exists. The Applicant needs to perform a boating safety analysis in conjunction with any proposals to attract additional boating activity to the Island. Recommendations for enhancing boating safety should be incorporated into the plan, by either discouraging additional boat traffic, strictly enforcing speed limits, or in some other way providing guidelines to enhance boating safety.

This proposal includes the placement of a breakwater on one of the most dynamic inlets in Palm Beach County, and it would be advisable to analyze the potential shoaling and accretion effects of this action, as well as any anticipated impact it may have on existing habitat. It is recommended that the Corps explore this issue in its preparation of the Environmental Assessment.

Thank you for the opportunity of commenting on this proposal. If you have any questions regarding this letter please give me a call at (850) 487-2231.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Hall
Office of Intergovernmental
Programs

cc: Mary Morris
Don Keirn
Phil Flood



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
(727) 570-5312, FAX 570-5517

MAR - 9 1999

F/SER3:LEB

Mr. James C. Duck
Chief, Planning Division
Department of the Army
Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Dear Mr. Duck:

This responds to your February 5, 1999 letter to me regarding the Section 1135 Peanut Island Environmental Restoration Project in Lake Worth Lagoon, Palm Beach County, Florida. The purpose of this project is to reestablish historic habitat for fisheries and wildlife by creating wetland and upland habitat on Peanut Island. The project proposes the creation of a 1.0 acre shallow-water reef habitat to -10 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD), by clearing exotic vegetation, excavating dredged material and placing limestone boulders as substrate for reef habitat on the southeast side of the island, and creating an adjacent 1.0 acre shallow-water lagoon to a depth of -5 feet NGVD by removing dredged material. According to your letter, there may be impacts to seagrass, including the Federally-listed threatened Johnson's seagrass, *Halophila johnsonii*. This initiates consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

In order for National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to complete a section 7 consultation, we need complete information regarding the presence and amount of Johnson's seagrass that occurs in the project site and how this species may be affected by the project's actions. The 1.0 acre seagrass bed located at the site of the proposed shallow-water reef habitat on the southeast end of Peanut Island has not been identified by species. In addition, the Draft Marine Seagrass Survey is of little use for this project since it constitutes a survey of the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) and is not a survey around Peanut Island. Any *Halophila* observed was not identified to species. The shallow shoreline, an area where Johnson's seagrass is known to occur, was not surveyed. The survey occurred in October rather than in the summer, as recommended, when growth and abundance of seagrass are optimal. In addition, a trained surveyor should be able to identify Johnson's seagrass, distinguishing it from other *Halophila* species, with the naked eye. A surveyor could choose to use an underwater magnifier or light, however, taking of samples should not be necessary (particularly during preferred summers surveys) unless water clarity is so poor that it prevents in-water identification.



Lake Worth Lagoon is a significant area for Johnson's seagrass. According to Figure 2, Page 4 of the Environmental Assessment Report, the 1.0 acre of seagrass will not be directly affected by the construction of the artificial reef with the chosen Alternative A. However, the loss of sea floor adjacent to seagrass beds can negatively impact their existence. NMFS Ecologist Mark Fonseca (1998) wrote: "What we have found is that patchy seagrass beds colonize new space and vacate existing, occupied space over time. This is not news, we have simply documented this in seagrass beds of *Halodule wrightii* and *Zostera marina* in North Carolina. Some of this movement is from vegetative propagation (e.g., runners or tillers), some is the result of successful seed colonization, and some is from plant mortality (creation of vacancies). The rate at which this movement occurs depends upon the inherent population growth rate of the species involved, and *Halophila* spp. have some of the highest rates on record (Josselyn *et al.* 1986, Kenworthy *et al.* 1989). So to remove a section of the sea floor among existing patches from future colonization is to prevent existing seagrass, which *must* migrate, from colonizing new areas and maintaining its local overall abundance. Such a removal ultimately deletes a portion of the baseline resource and when represented as a spatial pattern on the sea floor, constitutes a fragmentation of the existing resource."

It is unclear from the information provided whether the new artificial reef structure (fingers) would eliminate open patches of sea floor that allow for the natural future colonization of seagrasses, particularly Johnson's seagrass which is known to rely heavily on vegetative propagation and migration to adjacent open sea floor. The southeast corner of the proposed reef appears to have the most potential of interrupting seagrass growth. NMFS may concur that this project offers a net benefit to the environment but only if it is not eliminating seagrass habitat in the process. A combination of beneficial and adverse effects is still "likely to adversely affect" Johnson's seagrass.

Although you state that the construction of the artificial reef would be located to avoid any seagrasses, you state further in your letter that "there may be some change in the tidal flushing patterns around the island" and "have not been able to determine how much seagrass could be impacted." Page 35, 4.5.4 of the Environmental Restoration Report states that the proposed tidal changes have the potential to recruit *Halophila johnsonii*. NMFS agrees that the creation of shallow-water habitat adjacent to the shallow-water reef *has the potential* for seagrass recruitment and therefore *may* have an eventual beneficial effect upon Johnson's seagrass. However, if recruitment does occur, it cannot be determined with certainty that it would be of Johnson's seagrass.

If Johnson's seagrass does exist in the project area, then the *preliminary assessment* appears to be that this project may affect but not adversely affect Johnson's seagrass. However, a final determination cannot be made, and a section 7 consultation under the ESA can not be concluded, until further information is provided to NMFS, Protected Resources Division on: a) the presence and amount of Johnson's seagrass in the project area, and b) the submerged structure of the proposed shallow-water reef. If Johnson's seagrass does not exist in the project area, a section 7 consultation with this office is not necessary.

NMFS requests the following information:

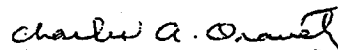
1. Does Johnson's seagrass exist in this 1.0 acre of seagrass? If so, please identify its relative abundance at this site.
2. How much of the sea floor (potential seagrass habitat) will be covered by the new shallow-reef structure? What are the dimensions of the "fingers" that will occur on either side of the seagrass bed? To what maximum depth will they extend? What will be the approximate distance(s) between the reef and seagrass bed? (Figure 2, Page 5, Environmental Restoration Report).
3. Could changes in tidal flushing patterns produce an erosion or deposition of sand on the 1.0 acre seagrass bed or adjacent areas?

In addition, NMFS strongly recommends pre- and post-monitoring for three years of the 1.0 acre seagrass bed and the proposed shallow-water lagoon, regardless of the presence of Johnson's seagrass. Such monitoring could include: species identification and abundance, bed/patch dimensions, seagrass bed location (using GPS to map its boundaries). Changes in the existing seagrass bed would be tracked over time, and the monitoring of the "new" shallow-water lagoon could provide valuable information on the recruitment of seagrass, including Johnson's seagrass, into such an area. This information will be useful to the COE and NMFS when considering future COE permitting requests in areas where *Halophila johnsonii* exists and will facilitate and expedite the permitting process. The COE should develop estimates of annual take of Johnson's (and other) seagrass anticipated by projects within Florida's intracoastal waterways within Johnson's seagrass habitat.

NMFS suggests that the Environmental Restoration Report be amended to include the Federally-listed threatened species under NMFS purview, Johnson's seagrass, *Halophila johnsonii*.

We appreciate the opportunity for initial consultation on this project and look forward to working with you for the conservation of listed species. If you have any questions please contact Ms. Layne Bolen, Fishery Biologist, of the Protected Resources Division at 727-570-5312.

Sincerely,



Charles A. Oravetz
Chief, Protected Resources Division

cc: F/PR3

F/SER4 - M. Thompson

o:/section7/informal/peanutis.js

File: 1514-22 f.1 FL (JSG)

References Cited:

Fonseca, M.S. 1998. Memorandum to M. Thompson, NMFS Habitat Conservation Division, Response to comments by C. Isiminger and attachments. 18 August.

Josselyn, M., M.S. Fonseca, T. Niesen and R. Larson. 1986. Biomass, production and decomposition of a deep-water seagrass, *Halophila decipiens* Ostenf. Aquatic Botany, Vol. 25, p. 47-61.

Kenworthy, W.J., C.A. Currin, M.S. Fonseca and G. Smith. 1989. Production, decomposition, and heterotrophic utilization of the seagrass *Halophila decipiens* in a submarine canyon. Mar. Ecol. Prog. Ser. 51:277-290.

Planning Division
Environmental Branch

DEC 08 1999

Mr. Charles A. Oravetz
Chief, Protected Resources Division
National Marine Fisheries Services
Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

Dear Mr. Oravetz:

This is in reference to the Section 1135 Peanut Island Environmental Restoration Project Study in Lake Worth Lagoon, which we are currently conducting. We received your March 9, 1999 Section 7 consultation reply (enclosed) that requested additional information concerning the listed Johnson's Seagrass in the project vicinity. After further investigations and design considerations, adverse affect to the Johnson's Seagrass within the project vicinity are unlikely.

The approximate 1.0 acre area of seagrass located to the southeast of the proposed Section 1135 Peanut Island Environmental Restoration Project was inspected by a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and local sponsor dive team September 20, 1999. No activity is planned within 25 feet of this area. The team's inspection revealed the seagrass area to be comprised primarily of Cuban Shoalweed (*Halodule wrightii*) with Johnson's Seagrass (*Halophila johnsonii*) in the deeper areas (down to 6-0' MLW) and shallow areas (up to 1-0' MLW). It was also noted the substrate changed from sand to small rock along the eastern edge of the seagrass area. Some areas of mixed seagrass (co-dominance of both species) was also noted (see enclosure 2).

The shallow water reef and lagoon component proposed on the southeast corner of Peanut Island is proposed to be excavated from the island upland area to avoid adverse affects to the existing seagrass patch in that vicinity. The "fingers" are no longer proposed in the shallow water reef and lagoon restoration component. The approximate distance between the proposed reef and the existing seagrass bed is still being finalized at this time. The proposed environmental restoration components are not anticipated to change the tidal flushing patterns to adversely affect the seagrass patch in the project vicinity. The National Marine Fisheries Service monitoring recommendations have been noted. We concur that the 'new lagoon' could provide valuable information on the recruitment of seagrasses in a manner similar to the environmental restoration completed at Munyon Island in Lake Worth Lagoon.

Based on this information, we do not believe the existing patch of seagrass in the vicinity of the proposed environmental restoration project will be adversely affected. In addition, the proposed project is an environmental restoration project that proposes to restore historical maritime hammock, mangrove and seagrass habitat. Therefore, pursuant to Section 7 of the Act, we have determined that the proposed action would not likely adversely affect Johnson's Seagrass and are asking for concurrence in this matter.

While we believe there would be no "incidental take" of Johnson's Seagrass, it appears that there is no incidental take prohibition for this threatened plant species (Final ESA Consultation Handbook, March 1998). This action would not occur in or impact any proposed critical habitat for the species (Federal Register, December 2, 1999).

If you have any questions concerning this project, please contact Mr. Paul Stevenson at 904-232-2130.

Sincerely,

James C. Duck
Chief, Planning Division

Enclosures

Copy Furnished:

Mr. Carmen Vare-Vernachio, Environmental Specialist, Palm Beach County DERM
3323 Belvedere Road, Bldg 502, West Palm Beach Florida 33406

bcc: CESAJ-DP-I (T. Murphy)
CESAJ-PD-PF (P. Karch)

Stevenson/CESAJ-PD-ER/2130/
Dugger/CESAJ-PD-ER
Smith/CESAJ-PD-E
Strain/CESAJ-PD-P
Murphy/CESAJ-DP-I
Duck/CESAJ-PD

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
(727) 570-5312, FAX 570-5517

MAR - 9 1999

F/SER3:LEB

Mr. James C. Duck
Chief, Planning Division
Department of the Army
Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

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NMFS requests the following information:

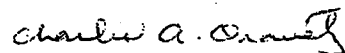
1. Does Johnson's seagrass exist in this 1.0 acre of seagrass? If so, please identify its relative abundance at this site.
2. How much of the sea floor (potential seagrass habitat) will be covered by the new shallow-reef structure? What are the dimensions of the "fingers" that will occur on either side of the seagrass bed? To what maximum depth will they extend? What will be the approximate distance(s) between the reef and seagrass bed? (Figure 2, Page 5, Environmental Restoration Report).
3. Could changes in tidal flushing patterns produce an erosion or deposition of sand on the 1.0 acre seagrass bed or adjacent areas?

In addition, NMFS strongly recommends pre- and post-monitoring for three years of the 1.0 acre seagrass bed and the proposed shallow-water lagoon, regardless of the presence of Johnson's seagrass. Such monitoring could include: species identification and abundance, bed/patch dimensions, seagrass bed location (using GPS to map its boundaries). Changes in the existing seagrass bed would be tracked over time, and the monitoring of the "new" shallow-water lagoon could provide valuable information on the recruitment of seagrass, including Johnson's seagrass, into such an area. This information will be useful to the COE and NMFS when considering future COE permitting requests in areas where *Halophila johnsonii* exists and will facilitate and expedite the permitting process. The COE should develop estimates of annual take of Johnson's (and other) seagrass anticipated by projects within Florida's intracoastal waterways within Johnson's seagrass habitat.

NMFS suggests that the Environmental Restoration Report be amended to include the Federally-listed threatened species under NMFS purview, Johnson's seagrass, *Halophila johnsonii*.

We appreciate the opportunity for initial consultation on this project and look forward to working with you for the conservation of listed species. If you have any questions please contact Ms. Layne Bolen, Fishery Biologist, of the Protected Resources Division at 727-570-5312.

Sincerely,



Charles A. Oravetz
Chief, Protected Resources Division

cc: F/PR3

F/SER4 - M. Thompson

o:/section7/informal/peanutis.jsjg

File: 1514-22 f.1 FL (JSG)

References Cited:

Fonseca, M.S. 1998. Memorandum to M. Thompson, NMFS Habitat Conservation Division, Response to comments by C. Isiminger and attachments. 18 August.

Josselyn, M., M.S. Fonseca, T. Niesen and R. Larson. 1986. Biomass, production and decomposition of a deep-water seagrass, *Halophila decipiens* Ostenf. Aquatic Botany, Vol. 25, p. 47-61.

Kenworthy, W.J., C.A. Currin, M.S. Fonseca and G. Smith. 1989. Production, decomposition, and heterotrophic utilization of the seagrass *Halophila decipiens* in a submarine canyon. Mar. Ecol. Prog. Ser. 51:277-290.



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406 • (561) 686-8800 • FL WATS 1-800-432-2045 • TDD (561) 697-2574
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 24680, West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680 • www.sfwmd.gov

January 28, 2000

Russ Rote, P.E., Chief
Flood Control and Flood Plain Management Section
Planning Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District
400 West Bay Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Dear Mr. Rote:

**SUBJECT: PEANUT ISLAND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE PERMIT**

This letter is written to provide preliminary comments regarding the conceptual design associated with the Peanut Island Environmental Restoration project (plans attached). The South Florida Water Management District has reviewed the conceptual plans and concludes that the project could meet the conditions for issuance of an Environmental Resource Permit and be recommended for permit issuance.

The project proposes environmental features including a shallow-water reef, shallow-water lagoons, tidal pond and flushing channels to restore existing mangroves and erosion control and public access features. There are likely to be some wetland impacts associated with the project that may necessitate mitigation. Construction techniques will be reviewed to minimize impacts and to maintain compliance with water quality standards.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (561) 682-6951.

Sincerely:

Robert Robbins, Director
Natural Resource Management Division

c: Julie Bishop, Palm Beach County DERM

GOVERNING BOARD

Michael Collins, *Chairman*
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Planning Division
Environmental Branch

DEC 08 1999

Mr. Charles A. Oravetz
Chief, Protected Resources Division
National Marine Fisheries Services
Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

Dear Mr. Oravetz:

This is in reference to the Section 1135 Peanut Island Environmental Restoration Project Study in Lake Worth Lagoon, which we are currently conducting. We received your March 9, 1999 Section 7 consultation reply (enclosed) that requested additional information concerning the listed Johnson's Seagrass in the project vicinity. After further investigations and design considerations, adverse affect to the Johnson's Seagrass within the project vicinity are unlikely.

The approximate 1.0 acre area of seagrass located to the southeast of the proposed Section 1135 Peanut Island Environmental Restoration Project was inspected by a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and local sponsor dive team September 20, 1999. No activity is planned within 25 feet of this area. The team's inspection revealed the seagrass area to be comprised primarily of Cuban Shoalweed (*Halodule wrightii*) with Johnson's Seagrass (*Halophila johnsonii*) in the deeper areas (down to 6-0' MLW) and shallow areas (up to 1-0' MLW). It was also noted the substrate changed from sand to small rock along the eastern edge of the seagrass area. Some areas of mixed seagrass (co-dominance of both species) was also noted (see enclosure 2).

The shallow water reef and lagoon component proposed on the southeast corner of Peanut Island is proposed to be excavated from the island upland area to avoid adverse affects to the existing seagrass patch in that vicinity. The "fingers" are no longer proposed in the shallow water reef and lagoon restoration component. The approximate distance between the proposed reef and the existing seagrass bed is still being finalized at this time. The proposed environmental restoration components are not anticipated to change the tidal flushing patterns to adversely affect the seagrass patch in the project vicinity. The National Marine Fisheries Service monitoring recommendations have been noted. We concur that the 'new lagoon' could provide valuable information on the recruitment of seagrasses in a manner similar to the environmental restoration completed at Munyon Island in Lake Worth Lagoon.

Based on this information, we do not believe the existing patch of seagrass in the vicinity of the proposed environmental restoration project will be adversely affected. In addition, the proposed project is an environmental restoration project that proposes to restore historical maritime hammock, mangrove and seagrass habitat. Therefore, pursuant to Section 7 of the Act, we have determined that the proposed action would not likely adversely affect Johnson's Seagrass and are asking for concurrence in this matter.

While we believe there would be no "incidental take" of Johnson's Seagrass, it appears that there is no incidental take prohibition for this threatened plant species (Final ESA Consultation Handbook, March 1998). This action would not occur in or impact any proposed critical habitat for the species (Federal Register, December 2, 1999).

If you have any questions concerning this project, please contact Mr. Paul Stevenson at 904-232-2130.

Sincerely,

James C. Duck
Chief, Planning Division

Enclosures

Copy Furnished:

Mr. Carmen Vare-Vernachio, Environmental Specialist, Palm Beach County DERM
3323 Belvedere Road, Bldg 502, West Palm Beach Florida 33406

bcc: CESAJ-DP-I (T. Murphy)
CESAJ-PD-PF (P. Karch)

Stevenson/CESAJ-PD-ER/2130/
Dugger/CESAJ-PD-ER
Smith/CESAJ-PD-E
Strain/CESAJ-PD-P
Murphy/CESAJ-DP-I
Duck/CESAJ-PD

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Planning Division
Environmental Branch

FEB 07 2000

Mr. Charles A. Oravetz
Chief, Protected Resources Division
National Marine Fisheries Services
Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

Dear Mr. Oravetz,

This letter initiates coordination under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. It is in reference to the Section 1135 Peanut Island Environmental Restoration Project Study in Lake Worth Lagoon, which we are currently conducting. The project proposes to restore approximately 3 acres of existing mangroves habitat by creating 1.5 acres of tidal flushing channels and inlet ponding areas. The project also proposes to create 1.3 acres of shallow water reef, 3 acres of shallow water lagoon, remove exotic vegetation and plant approximately 7 acres of native maritime hammock species, 4 acres of coastal strand species, 4.6 acres of beach dune species and 16 acres of submerged wetlands (see enclosure 1).

The shallow water reef and lagoon component proposed on the southeast corner of Peanut Island is proposed to be excavated from the island upland area to avoid adverse affects to the existing seagrass patch in that vicinity. The proposed environmental restoration components are not anticipated to change the tidal flushing patterns to adversely affect the seagrass patch in the project vicinity (see enclosure 2). The project would provide additional habitat and habitat improvement for seagrass, mangroves and open water.

Therefore, pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Section 600.920(g)), we have determined that the proposed action would not likely adversely affect any essential fish habitat within the project area and are asking for concurrence in this matter.

A copy of the revised draft Peanut Island, Environmental Assessment, January 2000, is enclosed for your information.

James C. Duck
Chief, Planning Division

Enclosure

Copies Furnished:

Mr. Mark Thompson, National Marine Fisheries Service, Environmental Assessment
Branch, 3500 Delwood Beach Road, Panama City, Florida 32407-7499

Mr. Carmen Vare-Vernachio, Environmental Specialist, Palm Beach County Department
Environmental Resources Management, 3323 Belvedere Road, Building 502, West
Palm Beach, Florida 33406

bcc:

CESAJ-PD-PF (P. Karch)

[Handwritten initials] Stevenson\CESAJ-PD-ER\2130\als 1/27/00
[Handwritten initials] Dugger\CESAJ-PD-ER
[Handwritten initials] Smith\CESAJ-PD-E
[Handwritten initials] Strain\CESAJ-PD-P
[Handwritten initials] Murphy\CESAJ-DP-I 24
[Handwritten initials] Dyer\CESAJ-PD

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

February 29, 2000

Mr. James C. Duck, Chief Planning Division
Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
Environmental Branch
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

Dear Mr. Duck:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed your staff's letter dated February 7, 2000, concerning coordination under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) and the revised draft Environmental Assessment (EA) dated January 2000 for the proposed Peanut Island Environmental Restoration Project in Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida.

The proposed restoration project includes constructing a 1.3 acre shallow water reef, 3.0 acres of mangrove restoration, 3.0 acres of shallow water lagoon, tidal ponds and channels, 7.1 acres of maritime hammocks restoration, 3.9 acres of coastal strand restoration, and 4.6 acres of beach dune restoration. In addition, dredged material used in the above mentioned restoration components of Peanut Island will be used for the restoration of 16.0 acres of a previously dredged site within Lake Worth (City of Lake Worth Wetland Restoration area). The latter will restore the shallow water habitat of the dredged area in order to provide suitable conditions for recolonization of seagrasses and benthic communities. The close proximity of the project to the Lake Worth Inlet should provide high water quality and recruitment of marine organisms to the restored habitat. The project design should maximize the amount of tidally influenced habitat and may increase the potential of mangrove and seagrass recruitment to Peanut Island. For this aspect of the work, we concur with your determination that the proposed action would not likely adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat as designated under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

However, it is not clear in the EA how the shallow water reef habitat will be designed and constructed, other than placement of limestone boulders will occur in the vicinity of the proposed lagoon area on the southeast side of the island. Because of the apparent close proximity of the proposed shallow water reef to existing seagrasses, the seagrass area should be monitored to assess direct impact during reef construction and from any scouring that may occur from wave energy deflecting from the limestone boulders.



Also, based on a recent Corps of Engineers' (COE) Notice of Noncompliance (199603357[NC-BM]) to Palm Beach County and their contractor, Intercounty Engineering Inc., for unauthorized work in seagrasses at the Light Harbor Marina Park from barges and tug boats associated with permitted work on Peanut Island, the NMFS has concerns that barges and other equipment working within the area around Peanut Island during the COE's restoration project will also impact shallow seagrass beds in Lake Worth. The COE should prepare, and provide for our review, a construction plan that details the operating depths of the barge staging areas, routes to and from Peanut Island, locations in the area where seagrasses exist and the means to avoid impacting these areas. We recommend a pre- and post-construction seagrass monitoring schedule be implemented. This will provide current data if impacts to seagrass habitat do occur.

In consideration of the potential impacts associated with seagrass habitat and to ensure the conservation of Essential Fish Habitat and fishery resources, the NMFS recommends that the final action on the proposed action should require the following:

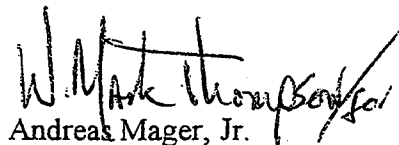
EFH Conservation Recommendation

1. That a construction plan for all aspects of the project be developed to avoid seagrass impacts.
2. A seagrass monitoring plan be developed for the area of Lake Worth that will be subjected to construction equipment and activities associated with this project.

Please be advised that the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the regulation to implement the EFH provisions (50 CFR Section 600.920) require your office to provide a written response to this letter. That response must be provided within 30 days and at least 10 days prior to final agency action. A preliminary response is acceptable if final action cannot be completed within 30 days. Your final response must include a description of measures to be required to avoid, mitigate, or offset the adverse impacts of the activity. If your response is inconsistent with our EFH Conservation Recommendation, you must provide an explanation of the reasons for not implementing those recommendations.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments. If we can be of further assistance, please advise. Related comments, questions or correspondence should be directed to Mr. Michael R. Johnson in Miami, Florida, at 305-595-8352.

Sincerely,



Andreas Mager, Jr.
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division

PEANUT ISLAND - PALM BEACH COUNTY
MAILING LIST

U.S. Department of Commerce
Attn: Donna Wieting
ACHB SQ Room 6117
Washington, D.C. 20230 (5 cys)

Florida Audubon Society
1101 Audubon Way
Maitland, Florida 32751-5451

Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P. O. Box 2676
Vero Beach, Florida 32961-2676

Florida State Clearinghouse
The Dept. of Community Affairs
2555 Shumard Oak Blvd.
TAL, FL 32399-2100 (16 cys)

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TAL, Florida 32314-6870

Regional Environmental Officer
Housing & Urban Development
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75 Spring St., SW
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Commander (OAN)
Seventh Coast Guard District
909 S.E. 1st Avenue
Bricknell Plaza Federal Building
MIA, Florida 33131-3050

State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation
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401 First Avenue, S.E.
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Wilderness Society
4203 Ponce DeLeon Blvd.
Coral Gables, Florida 33416

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Environmental Assessment Branch
3500 Delwood Beach Road
Panama City, Florida 32407-7499

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Chief, Protected Species Branch
9721 Executive Center Drive N
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Harbor Branch Oceanographic Inst.
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Fort Pierce, Florida 34946

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3111 S. Dixie Hwy, Ste 146
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Water Resources Division
6482 SE Federal Highway
Stuart, Florida 33494

Honorable Bob Graham
P.O. Box 3050
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Honorable Connie Mack
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TAL, Florida 32301-2988

South Florida Section Leader
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110 43rd Avenue SW
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Regional Director
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1875 Century Blvd.
ATL, Georgia 30345

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Florida Wildlife Federation
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1801 Hillmore Drive
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Indian River Lagoon National
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1900 South Harbor City Blvd
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Senior Environmental Analyst
Coastal and Wetlands Division
3111 South Dixie Highway, Ste 146
WPB, Florida 33405

Audubon Society of the Everglades
P.O. Box 16914
WPB, FL 33416-6914

Ms. Sally Warner
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3900 Commonwealth Blvd., M.S. 105
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P.O. Box 10441
Rivera Beach, Florida 33419

American Littoral Society
2809 Bird Ave., Ste 162
MIA, Florida 33133

The Nature Conservancy
Florida State Office
1353 Palmetto Avenue
Winter Park, FL 32789

Mr. David Roach
F.I.N.D.
1314 Marcinski Road
Jupiter, FL 33477

Isaac Walton League of America, Inc.
5314 Bay State Road
Palmetto, FL 33561-9712

Mr. David Godfrey
Caribbean Conservation Corp
P.O. Box 2866
GVL, FL 32602-2866

Florida Dept. Of Envir Protection
Office of Aquatic Preserves
1801 SE Hillmoor Drive, Ste 0204
Port St. Lucie, FL 34952-7551

US Env Protection Agency
South Florida Office
400 N. Congress Ave., Suite 120
WPB, FL 33401

Division of State Lands
Bureau of Survey & Mapping
3900 Commonwealth Blvd, M.S. 105
TAL, FL 32399-3000

Florida Dept. of Envir. Protection
Division of State Lands
P.O. Box 15425
WPB, FL 33416-5425

Florida Dept. of Envir. Protection
South Florida District
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WPB, FL 33416-5425

Mr. George W. Percy
State Historic Preservation Officer
Division of Historical Resources
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TAL, FL 32399-0250

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61 Forsythe Street
ATL, GA 30303-3104 (5 cys)

Florida Dept. of Envir. Protection
Florida Marine Research Institute
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FL Game & Fresh Water Fish. Comm.
255 154th Avenue
Vero Beach, FL 32968-9041

Regional Director
FEMA Insurance & Mitigation Division
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Executive Director
South Florida Water Management Dist.
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WPB, FL 33416

National Marine Fisheries Service
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Regional Director
National Marine Fisheries Service
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Mr. Tom Logan
FL Game & Fresh Water Fish Comm
Endangered Species Coordinator
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TAL, FL 32399-1600

Mr. Richard E. Walesky
Palm Beach County Department of
Environmental Resources Mgmt
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WPB, FL 33406

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FL Game & Fresh Water Fish Comm
Director Office of Env Services
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Honorable Edward J. Healey
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Honorable E. Clay Shaw, Jr.
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WPB, FL 33401

Honorable Robert Wexler
2500 N. Military Trail, Ste 100
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Honorable Alcee L. Hastings
5725 Corporate Way, Ste 208
WPB, FL 33407

Honorable William G. Myers, M.D.
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Stuart, FL 34994-3058

Honorable M. Mandy Dawson-White
33 N.E. 2nd St., Ste 209
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301-1033

Honorable James A. Scott
2000 E. Oakland Park Blvd
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33306-1195

Honorable Ron Klein
333 South Congress Ave., Ste 305A
Delray Beach, FL 33445

Honorable Tom Rossin
1241 Okeechobee Road
Bldg A, Ste 4
WPB, FL 33401-6953

Honorable Sharon J. Merchant
824 U.S. Hwy 1, Ste 260
North Palm Beach, FL 33408

Honorable Addie L. Greene
330 Clematis St., Ste 104B
WPB, FL 33401-4602

Honorable Lois J. Frankel
1645 Palm Beach Lake Blvd
Ste 290
WPB, FL 33401

Honorable William F. Andrews
777 E. Atlantic Ave., Ste 226
Delray Beach, FL 33483-5352

Honorable Suzanne Jacobs
990 S. Congress Ave., Ste 5
Delray Beach, FL 33445-4653

Honorable Debbie P. Sanderson
4800 N.E. 20th Terrace
South Bldg, Ste 401
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308-4572



59

Director
General & Assistant
Ernie Fournier
Managerial Services
Vernon Fournier
Human Resources
Arlene City & Town
County Attorney
Cory [] []

~~RECEIVED~~
R. Walcott
C. 1/2

The Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), is gathering information to define issues and concerns that will be addressed in the environmental restoration of Peanut Island in Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida. Authority and funding are provided by Section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996. An Initial Appraisal Report determined there is Federal interest in the project. This resulted in the undertaking of an Environmental Restoration Report that is currently underway.

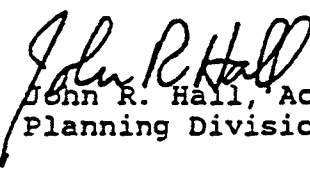
It is the intent of the Corps, to prepare an Environmental Assessment for the environmental restoration of Peanut Island in Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida. Exotic vegetation will be removed and a more natural and native landscape will be constructed on the man-made island of dredged material. Peanut Island is owned by the Port of Palm Beach with a lease hold to the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) for the storage of dredged material. The Port of Palm Beach has a designated disposal site on the island also. The U.S. Coast Guard also occupies the southeast corner of the island.

Palm Beach County has requested the Corps' assistance in removing exotic vegetation and creating a 9.1 acre maritime hammock, removing exotic vegetation and excavating tidal channels for the establishment of 3.5 acres of mangrove habitat, and the construction of a 1 acre shallow water reef with a breakwater. The maritime hammock (enclosure 2) will be located on the island's western and eastern island areas to provide habitat for migrating and local birdlife. Two existing isolated mangrove areas on the island's western side will be joined and improved with the construction of tidal channels (enclosure 1). Intertidal marshgrass (*Spartina* spp.) will also be planted to help prevent erosion and provide additional habitat for breeding and feeding wildlife. The shallow-water reef is proposed on the southeastern corner of the island (enclosure 1) next to the Lake Worth Inlet Channel. The reef will provide larvae transported in the channel a place to settle and grow.

JAN 2 1961

Please assist the Corps in planning and evaluating the possible environmental impacts of the proposed project. We welcome your views , comments, and information about the resources, study objectives, and important features within the described study area, as well as suggested improvements to the island environment. Letters of comment or inquiry should be directed within thirty (30) days of the date of this letter to the letterhead address, attention Planning Division, Environmental Branch.

Sincerely,


John R. Hall, Acting Chief
Planning Division

Enclosures



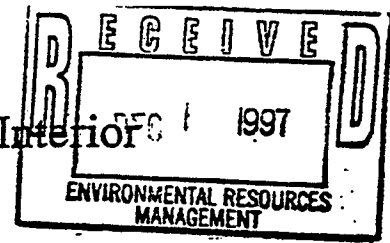
United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

South Florida Ecosystem Office

P.O. Box 2676

Vero Beach, Florida 32961-2676



November 18, 1997

Dennis R. Duke, Acting Chief
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Attn: Planning Division

FWS Log No.: 4-1-98-I-237

1135 Project: Peanut Island

County: Palm Beach

Dear Mr. Duke:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has reviewed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (COE) restoration plan for Peanut Island under Section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992. This letter represents the FWS' opinion on the effects of the proposed action in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (ESA) and with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*). We have assigned FWS Log Number 4-1-98-I-237 to this consultation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Originally a shallow water area, Peanut Island was created in 1918 as a result of material excavated from creating Lake Worth Inlet. Since 1934, the COE has used the island as a deposition site for material dredged from Lake Worth Inlet and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. As a result of these numerous dredging efforts, a 79-acre island was formed and subsequently vegetated with exotic plants such as Australian pines (*Casuarina equisetifolia*). The island is located adjacent to the inlet in Lake Worth Lagoon, Palm Beach County, Florida.

In 1994, Palm Beach County, the Port of Palm Beach, and the Florida Inland Navigation District proposed to restore Peanut Island by removing exotic vegetation, enhancing native plant communities, and improving the island's passive recreational opportunities. In 1996, Palm Beach County requested the COE's assistance (through the Section 1135 Program) to restore Peanut Island, thereby providing these benefits. The restoration proposal consists of three components: (1) creating 9.1 acres of maritime hammock, (2) enhancing 3.5 acres of intertidal mangroves, and (3) creating one acre of shallow water hardbottom habitat. Though not an objective under Section 1135, the restoration proposal will also result in providing some limited passive recreational benefits. The details for each restoration component are as follows:

1. Maritime hammock

Two maritime hammocks, totaling 9.1 acres, are proposed on the east and west sides of the island. The proposed actions include clearing and chipping exotic vegetation followed by replanting with native vegetation.

2. Mangrove wetlands

Two isolated mangrove areas, totaling 3.5 acres along the west side of the island, are proposed to be hydrologically reconnected to the lagoon. The proposed action consists of excavating approximately 3,000 feet of channel to tidally flush the mangrove areas.

3. Shallow water reef

This one acre site is located along the southeast corner of the island. The proposed actions include (a) the excavation of approximately 24,000 cubic yards of material to create a basin with a depth of -10 feet NGVD and (b) the placement of approximately 4,800 tons of limestone boulders to create the reef complex. The transitional zone created between the basin and the adjacent uplands will be resloped and stabilized with native vegetation.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

We have reviewed the information in the restoration plan as well as information available to us on the presence of threatened and endangered species and designated critical habitat in the vicinity of the project site. Based on our review, the West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) as well as threatened and endangered sea turtles are present in and around Lake Worth Lagoon.

West Indian manatee

Our records indicate that the endangered West Indian manatee is present year-round in Lake Worth Lagoon. Furthermore, the lagoon is designated critical habitat for the manatee (50 CFR 17.95). The COE did not determine if the proposed action will have an effect on the manatee or its designated critical habitat. The restoration plan indicates some work is occurring below the mean low water line; therefore, we have determined a "may affect" for the manatee.

In a phone conversation with Kalani Cairns (FWS biologist) on November 4, 1997, Paul Stevenson (COE Project Manager) indicated that prior to the commencement of any operational activities associated with this project, the COE would implement the standard manatee construction precautions. Based on the COE's willingness to comply with these protective measures, we conclude that the restoration plan for Peanut Island is not likely to adversely affect the manatee nor is it likely to adversely modify or destroy its designated critical habitat.

Sea turtles

The proposed restoration project is located within the nesting ranges of the threatened loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) as well as the endangered green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), and hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). Again, the COE did not determine if the proposed action will have an effect on these

species. Since the restoration plan indicates work is occurring below the mean low water line, we have determined a "may affect" for listed sea turtles. However, based on the nature of the proposed work, we conclude that the restoration plan for Peanut Island is not likely to adversely affect threatened and endangered sea turtles. Currently, there is no critical habitat designated for the sea turtles listed above; therefore, none will be affected.

Although this does not constitute a Biological Opinion described under section 7 of the ESA, it does fulfill the requirements of the ESA, and no further action is required. If modifications are made to the project or if additional information involving potential effects on listed species becomes available, reinitiation of consultation may be necessary.

FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Fish and wildlife resources have been previously documented by Palm Beach County and summarized by the COE in the restoration plan for Peanut Island. Hence, it is unnecessary to present this same information on these resources within this letter. Instead, the discussion should focus on the expected benefits associated with this restoration effort. The purpose of the restoration plan is to create and enhance habitat for fisheries and wildlife. For each of the components, the anticipated environmental benefits are as follows:

1. Shallow water reef

Due to its close proximity to Lake Worth Inlet, the shallow water reef will provide substrate for oceanic larvae to settle and grow as well as offer excellent habitat for a wide range of fish species.

2. Mangrove wetlands

The creation of flushing channels will reconnect the isolated mangrove areas to the lagoon. Hence, the mangrove areas will be tidally flushed with clearer oceanic water, thereby providing habitat and water quality conditions preferred by nearshore reef fish species.

3. Maritime hammock

The creation of a maritime hammock will provide food and shelter for migratory birds and other wildlife. As background, tremendous development pressure throughout South Florida has created a multitude of ecosystem problems. Increased human habitation has increased additional development of coastal uplands, which has lead to an increase in invasive exotic flora and fauna. The concurrent loss of habitat has resulted in declining numbers of neotropical migratory avifauna. This assemblage of birds utilizes a wide variety of habitats extending throughout North, Central, and South America. Habitat loss and fragmentation have affected their survival and propagation. An additional and significant concern is the loss of refueling depots, areas where these birds have historically paused in their journeys to feed and rest. Maritime hammocks are a very unique and important biological resource. Creating over nine acres of maritime hammock will promote natural ecological functions to occur and increase biodiversity in an area with a diminishing coastal ecosystem. An additional ecological benefit includes the enhancement of upland habitat by creating the native plant species diversity upon which neotropical migrants depend. For instance, the

coastal spoil islands in the Indian River Lagoon have provided unique opportunities for creating appropriate forage habitat for migratory birds.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, Palm Beach County and the COE are cooperating under Section 1135 to restore Peanut Island. The FWS supports the proposed restoration plan for Peanut Island. We believe the restoration proposal qualifies for partial funding support from the FWS' South Florida Coastal Ecosystem Program (SFCEP). The primary objective of the SFCEP is to identify opportunities to protect, conserve, and restore coastal living resources. We accomplish this by actively forming partnerships with other federal and state agencies, local governments, non-governmental entities, and private property owners to implement "on-the-ground" restoration projects as well as to perform research, monitoring, and public outreach activities. Thus, we could participate in the creation of the maritime hammock with funding assistance from the SFCEP.

Once again, we are available to coordinate with you on this project as it continues to develop. Thank you for your interest in the effort to protect, conserve, and restore coastal living resources. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Cairns of our office at (561) 562-3909.

Sincerely,

Kalani Cairns

for James J. Slack
Project Leader
South Florida Field Office

cc:

NMFS, Miami, FL

GFC, Vero Beach, FL

DEP, Tallahassee, FL

✓ Palm Beach County, West Palm Beach, FL

FEDERALLY LISTED THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES
AND CANDIDATE SPECIES FOR FEDERAL LISTING
IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
Amphibians and Reptiles		
<i>Alligator mississippiensis</i>	American alligator	T (S/A)
<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Loggerhead sea turtle	T
<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Green sea turtle	E
<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	Leatherback sea turtle	E
<i>Drymarchon corais couperi</i>	Eastern indigo snake	T
<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	Hawksbill sea turtle	E
<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>	Kemp's (=Atlantic) ridley sea turtle	E
Birds		
<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>	Florida scrub-jay	T
<i>Campephilus principalis</i> (probably extinct in south Florida)	Ivory-billed woodpecker	E
<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Piping plover	T
<i>Dendroica kirtlandii</i>	Kirtland's warbler	E
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald eagle	T
<i>Mycteria americana</i>	Wood stork	E
<i>Picoides borealis</i>	Red-cockaded woodpecker	E
<i>Polyborus plancus audubonii</i>	Audubon's crested caracara	T
<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus</i>	Everglade snail kite	E*
<i>Sterna dougalli dougalli</i>	Roseate tern	T
<i>Vermivora bachmanii</i>	Bachman's warbler	E
Mammals		
<i>Felis concolor</i>	Mountain lion	T (S/A)
<i>Felis concolor coryi</i>	Florida panther	E
<i>Trichechus manatus latirostris</i>	West Indian manatee	E*
<i>Ursus americanus floridanus</i>	Florida black bear	C
Plants		
Family Annonaceae <i>Asimina tetramera</i>	Four-petal pawpaw	E
Family Convolvulaceae <i>Jacquemontia reclinata</i>	Beach jacquemontia	E
Family Cucurbitaceae <i>Cucurbita okeechobeensis</i>	Okeechobee gourd	E

* Critical habitat has been designated for this species in this county.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
-----------------	-------------	--------

Plants (continued)

Family Polygalaceae
Polygala smalli

Tiny polygala

E

* Critical habitat has been designated for this species in this county.

Palm Beach County

revised 1/15/97

SENT BY:

11-23PM BUREAU OF HIST. PRES.

BUREAU OF HIST. PRES.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Secretary
Office of International Relations
Division of Administrative Services
Division of Corporations
Division of Cultural Affairs



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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Sandra B. Mortham
Secretary of State
DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

November 6, 1997

Mr. Dennis R. Duke
Planning Division, Environmental Branch
Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

In Reply Refer To:
Frank J. Keel
Historic Preservation Planner
Project File No. 975725

RE: Cultural Resource Assessment Request
Environmental Restoration of Peanut Island
Palm Beach County, Florida

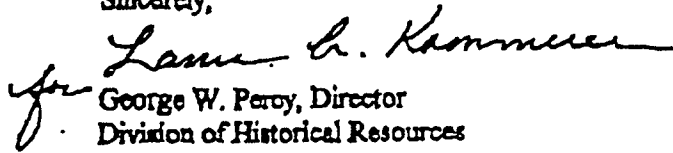
Dear Mr. Duke:

In accordance with the procedures contained in 36 C.F.R., Part 800 ("Protection of Historic Properties"), we have reviewed the referenced project(s) for possible impact to archaeological and historical sites or properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the *National Register of Historic Places*. The authority for this procedure is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), as amended.

The mentioned U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Planning Division project application has been reviewed by this agency. We note that the National Register eligible Kennedy Bunker and Coast Guard Station are located on Peanut Island; however, it is the opinion of this agency that the proposed undertaking will have no effect on the historic significance or character of the structures.

If you have any questions concerning our comments, please do not hesitate to contact us. Your interest in protecting Florida's historic properties is appreciated.

Sincerely,


George W. Perry, Director
Division of Historical Resources
and
State Historic Preservation Officer

GWP/K&K

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

R.A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250 • (850) 488-1480
FAX: (850) 488-3353 • WWW Address: <http://www.dos.state.fl.us>

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(850) 488-1484 • FAX: 921-2503



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

February 26, 1998

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
Mr. John R. Hall, Acting Chief
Planning Division
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

Dear Mr. Hall:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed your notice of intent dated January 27, 1998, regarding the Corps of Engineers proposal to prepare an environmental assessment for the environmental restoration of Peanut Island in Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida.

The proposed restoration project includes constructing of a 9.1 acre maritime hammock, removing exotic vegetation, excavating tidal channels for the establishment of 3.5 acres of mangrove habitat, and constructing of a 1.0 acre shallow water reef habitat. The NMFS supports this restoration effort and believes the project will have a positive impact to living marine resources.

A NMFS ecologist conducted an on-site inspection of the project site. The project site is excellent in terms of fishery recruitment potential and water quality because it is located at the Lake Worth Inlet. The project design should maximize this potential by providing as much tidally influenced habitat as possible, perhaps increasing the mangrove or tidal creek habitats. Also, there is possibility that the proposed tidal creeks may recruit and support seagrasses. Therefore, any project modifications that would result in additional seagrass habitat are desirable.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the project and look forward to the draft environmental assessment when it becomes available. If there are questions regarding these comments please contact Mr. John Iliff of our Panama City Office in Miami at 305/595-8352.

Sincerely,

Andreas Mager, Jr.
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division





PD

STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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LAWTON CHILES
Governor

March 13, 1998

JAMES F. MURLEY
Secretary

Mr. John R. Hall
Department of the Army
Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

RE: Department of the Army - Scoping Letter - Information to
Define Issues and Concerns for the Environmental Restoration
of Peanut Island - Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida
SAI: FL9801280034C

Dear Mr. Hall:

The Florida State Clearinghouse, pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 12372, Gubernatorial Executive Order 95-359, the Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1451-1464, as amended, and the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321, 4331-4335, 4341-4347, as amended, has coordinated a review of the above-referenced project.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has identified environmental concerns to be considered in the environmental assessment (EA) of the project. The EA should include a thorough review of manatee data and literature to help guide design decisions for the restoration project. The DEP also recommends that a seagrass survey be performed to determine where potential impacts may occur. The DEP discourages proposed developments which would reduce the amount of seagrasses available to manatees. The DEP's Bureau of Protected Species is available to assist the applicant in preparing the EA by providing data on manatee use patterns in Palm Beach County. The applicant should also perform a boating safety analysis in conjunction with any proposal to attract additional boating activity to the Island. Recommendations for enhancing boating safety should be incorporated into the plan. The DEP also advises analyzing the potential shoaling and accretion effect of the breakwater, in addition to any anticipated impacts it may have on existing habitat. The DEP recommends that the applicant explore this issue in its preparation of the EA. Please refer to the enclosed DEP comments.

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) indicates that additional information is necessary for evaluation of the consistency of the project with the Florida Coastal Management Program and the Environmental Resource Permit rules and criteria. The SFWMD notes that an Individual Environmental Resource Permit was issued for the construction and operation of a surface water management system on

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Phone: 850.488.8466/Suncom 278.8466 FAX: 850.921.0781/Suncom 291.0781
Internet address: <http://www.state.fl.us/comaff/dca.html>

FLORIDA KEYS
Area of Critical State Concern Field Office
2796 Overseas Highway, Suite 212

GREEN SWAMP
Area of Critical State Concern Field Office
155 East Summerlin

SOUTH FLORIDA RECOVERY OFFICE
P.O. Box 402
Fort Pierce, FL 34945

Mr. John R. Hall
March 13, 1998
Page Two

Peanut Island. The proposed plans appears to vary from the plan permitted by the SFWMD; therefore, the proposed plan may require a modification to the permit. The SFWMD also notes additional issues to be addressed in the preparation of the EA. The SFWMD recommends that the applicant contact the SFWMD's Natural Resource Management Division to ensure that all SFWMD concerns are addressed. Please refer to the enclosed SFWMD comments.

The Department of State (DOS) indicates that the Kennedy Bunker and Coast Guard Station, which are both eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, are located on Peanut Island. However, the DOS indicates that the proposed undertaking will have no adverse impacts on the historic significance or character of the structures. Please refer to the enclosed DOS comments.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) recommends that the applicant coordinate with the Port of Palm Beach Port Authority to ensure there are no project conflicts. The DOT also recommends that the applicant coordinate with Gee & Jensen regarding the Port of Palm Beach Master Plan. Please refer to the enclosed DOT comments.

Based on the information contained in the scoping letter and the enclosed comments provided by our reviewing agencies, the state has determined that, at this stage, the allocation of federal funds for the above-referenced project is consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP). All subsequent environmental documents prepared for this project must be reviewed to determine the project's continued consistency with the FCMP. The state's continued concurrence with the project will be based, in part, on the adequate resolution of issues identified during this and subsequent reviews.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the scoping letter. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Ms. Cherie Trainor, Clearinghouse Coordinator, at (850) 922-5438.

Sincerely,



Ralph Cantral, Executive Director
Florida Coastal Management Program

RC/cc

Enclosures

cc: George Percy, Department of State
Robert Hall, Department of Environmental Protection
James Golden, South Florida Water Management District
John Anderson, Department of Transportation

FLORIDALANTON CHILES
GOVERNOR**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING OFFICE - DISTRICT 4

THOMAS E. HARRY, JR.
SECRETARY3400 West Commercial Blvd., 3rd Floor, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309-3421
Telephone: (954) 777-4601; Fax: (954) 777-4671

February 16, 1998

Ms. Keri Akers, Coordinator
Florida State Clearinghouse
Department of Community Affairs
2555 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100

SUBJECT: Intergovernmental Coordination and Review (ICAR)
SAI# FL9801280034C
Description: Peanut Island

Dear Ms. Akers:

The Florida Department of Transportation has reviewed the above mentioned ICAR request and has the following comments:

According to the Port of Palm Beach Master Plan, the U.S. Coast Guard has moved from Peanut Island to new facilities and the Coast Guard station reverted to the Port of Palm Beach. The Plan states that this area is to be leased to the Palm Beach Maritime Museum Facilities and be developed as an educational and tourist attraction.

In addition, the Port and the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) have entered into long-term agreements with Palm Beach County to lease the perimeters of their respective holdings for development of a public-passive park. See the attached map for reference.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should check with the Port Authority to ensure there will be no conflict in projects between the proposed park and the maritime hammock. There may also be a conflict between the museum and the shallow-water reef site. Mr. J.B. Frost of Gee & Jensen can answer any questions regarding the Port of Palm Beach Master Plan. His number is (561) 683-3301.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this ICAR. If you have any questions, please contact me at SunCom 436-4649.

Sincerely,

John Anderson, Jr., AICP
Assistant Planning Manager

JA:rr

Enc.

cc: Sandra Whitmore, Central Office

S:\RenovUcar3.wpd



Department of Environmental Protection

Lawton Chiles
Governor

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

Virginia B. Wetherell
Secretary

March 9, 1998

RECEIVED
MAR 12 1998

Ms. Cherie Trainor
Florida State Clearinghouse
Department of Community Affairs
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2100

State of Florida Clearinghouse

Re: Department of the Army Scoping letter to Gather Information Defining Issues and Concerns for Restoration of Peanut Island in Lake Worth, Palm Beach County

SAI: FL9801280034C

Dear Ms. Trainor:

This Department has reviewed the above-described project proposal and based on the information provided, request that the following environmental concerns be considered in the Environmental Assessment of the project.

Manatees frequent this area due to plentiful seagrasses and a thermal refuge in close proximity; therefore, the Environmental Assessment should include a thorough review of manatee data and literature to help guide design decisions for this restoration project. Also, it is recommended that a seagrass survey be accomplished in the area to determine where potential impacts might occur from any proposed activities on the Island, such as the mooring or docking of boats, or by increased opportunities for swimming and snorkeling. The use of mooring buoys may be desirable to minimize habitat disruption.

This agency would discourage proposed developments which would reduce the amount of seagrasses available to manatees, or which would jeopardize their existence by unimpeded boating visits to the island. When there is sufficient information of the plan for use of the Island, our Bureau of Protected Species will be able to provide more specific recommendations for manatee protection. That office is willing to assist the applicant in preparing the environmental assessment by providing data on manatee use patterns in Palm Beach County.

It has been reported that this site is currently congested with an estimated 1,000 boats within a 2 mile radius. Additional boating activity could severely hinder navigation in the immediate vicinity. The Intracoastal Waterway channel passes very close to the west side

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FL9801280034C

March 9, 1998

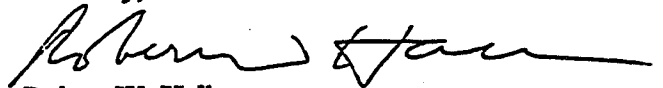
page 2

of the Island and with an alternate channel on the east side that is heavily used by local boat traffic. To the south is the main Port channel and turning basin. Additional structures and boat traffic will serve to exacerbate a navigation hazard which already exists. The Applicant needs to perform a boating safety analysis in conjunction with any proposals to attract additional boating activity to the Island. Recommendations for enhancing boating safety should be incorporated into the plan, by either discouraging additional boat traffic, strictly enforcing speed limits, or in some other way providing guidelines to enhance boating safety.

This proposal includes the placement of a breakwater on one of the most dynamic inlets in Palm Beach County, and it would be advisable to analyze the potential shoaling and accretion effects of this action, as well as any anticipated impact it may have on existing habitat. It is recommended that the Corps explore this issue in its preparation of the Environmental Assessment.

Thank you for the opportunity of commenting on this proposal. If you have any questions regarding this letter please give me a call at (850) 487-2231.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Hall

Office of Intergovernmental
Programs

cc: Mary Morris
Don Keirn
Phil Flood



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Sandra B. Mortham
Secretary of State
DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

February 9, 1998

Ms. Cherie Trainor
State Clearinghouse
Department of Community Affairs
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2100

In Reply Refer To:
Frank J. Keel
Historic Preservation Planner
Project File No. 980611

RE: Cultural Resource Assessment Request
SAI# 9801280034C
Environmental Restoration of Peanut Island
Palm Beach County, Florida

RECEIVED
FEB 12 1998

Dear Ms. Trainor:

State of Florida Clearinghouse

In accordance with the procedures contained in 36 C.F.R., Part 800 ("Protection of Historic Properties"), as well as the provisions contained in Chapter 267.061, *Florida Statutes*, we have reviewed the above referenced project(s) for possible impact to archaeological and historical sites or properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places, or otherwise of historical or architectural value.

A review of our records indicates that the National Register eligible Kennedy Bunker and Coast Guard Station are located on Peanut Island. However, it is the opinion of this agency that the proposed undertaking will have no effect on the historic significance or character of the structures. The proposed project is also consistent with the historic preservation laws of Florida's Coastal Management Program

If you have any questions concerning our comments, please do not hesitate to contact us. Your interest in protecting Florida's historic properties is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Laura A. Kemmerer

for George W. Percy, Director
Division of Historical Resources
and
State Historic Preservation Officer

GWP/Kfk

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

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South Florida Water Management District

3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406 • (561) 686-8800 • FL WATS 1-800-432-2045
TDD (561) 697-2574

GOV 04-12 RF: 98080

February 20, 1998

Ms. Keri Akers
Florida State Clearinghouse
Florida Department of Community Affairs
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100

RECEIVED
FEB 23 1998

State of Florida Clearinghouse

Dear Ms. Akers:

Subject: Proposed Environmental Restoration of Peanut Island (SAI #9801280034C)

In response to your request, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has reviewed the Scoping Letter submitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in connection with the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the above-referenced project. Although the proposed plan has the potential to significantly improve the existing environmental condition of Peanut Island and provide the public with increased recreational opportunities, additional information is necessary for staff to evaluate the consistency of this project with the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) and our Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) rules and criteria. After review of the Scoping Letter, staff has the following comments:

- (1) On October 10, 1996, the SFWMD issued an Individual Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) to Palm Beach County (Permit No. 50-03713-P) for the construction and operation of a surface water management system on Peanut Island. The permit authorized the construction of various recreational improvements, including a bulkhead, a fishing pier, dredging for barge access, buildings, and roads. The proposed plan appears to vary from the plan permitted by the SFWMD. Consequently, the proposed plan may require a modification to Permit No. 50-03713-P.
- (2) The following issues should be addressed in the preparation of the EA:
 - (a) Will the flushing channel impact existing wetlands?
 - (b) Will the flushing channel be used as a boat basin? If so, how deep is the basin and what size boats will it accommodate? Will this basin replace the previously permitted barge access area? How does the previously permitted dredge area relate to this proposal? Water quality could be a concern, depending upon how this area is designed. Hydrographic modeling may be necessary to assess this potential impact.

Governing Board:

Frank Williamson, Jr., Chairman
Eugene K. Pettis, Vice Chairman
Mitchell W. Berger

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William Hammond

Richard A. Machek
Michael D. Minton
Miriam Singer

Samuel E. Poole III, Executive Director
Michael Slayton, Deputy Executive Director

Ms. Keri Akers
February 20, 1998
Page 2

- (c) How will the shallow reef be constructed? Is any excavation proposed? Will rock or other similar material be deposited to create a reef? Reasonable assurances need to be provided that navigational hazards will not be created and that adequate flushing will be provided to prevent water quality problems.
- (3) Prior to preparation of the EA, the applicant should contact John Meyer in our Natural Resource Management Division at (561) 687-6773 to ensure that all SFWMD concerns are addressed.

If I can be of further assistance, please give me a call at (561) 687-6862.

Sincerely,



James J. Golden, AICP
Senior Planner
Regulation Department

/jig

c: John R. Hall, USACOE



Department of Environmental Protection

Lawton Chiles
Governor

Virginia B. Wetherell

Secretary

Director
Coastal & Wetlands
Env. Review
Mosquito Control
Water Resources
Business Affairs
Asst. City Admin.
County Admin.
Off. of Int. Affs.

October 10, 1996

To: Carmen Vare, Palm Beach County ERM

From: Jeff Beal, DEP Southeast Florida Aquatic Preserves

re: fish survey of Peanut Island and associated waters (8/23/96)

Dear Carmen:

Thanks for a great day at Peanut Island. The project has fantastic potential for the public and we've enjoyed being a part. The fish species list for the day is enclosed. I'm certain that the list comprises only a fraction of the fishes occurring (or potentially occurring) at the sites we surveyed. I've also included information on grant opportunities related to your projects.

The abbreviated snorkel survey of the rocks on the southeastern corner of Peanut Island produced 23 species. The coquina boulders were encrusted with tubiculous polychaetes (probably Sabellidae), algae, and sponges. We also saw a pair of portunid crabs.

The drift dive of the northern ledges of the inlet included rock outcrops, ledges, boulders, and sand bottom. Sponges, bryozoans, hydroids, algae, tubiculous polychaetes, soft corals (Gorgonaceae), and lobster inhabited the ledge sides. I recorded 35 species (from memory after the dive), but a comprehensive list could easily double that number. I was especially impressed by the abundance of hydroid/bryozoan colonies.

The artificial reef roofing structures and associated rock piles housed hydroids, bryozoans, tunicates, algae, sponges, arrow crab, banded coral shrimp, lobster, and an abundance of soft corals (Gorgonaceae). The outstretched tentacles of the actively feeding gorgonians were especially impressive during the outgoing tide. The structures appear to be functioning well as a tropical/subtropical lagoonal reef system, especially considering their recent placement. Lobster are obviously using the reefs as an inshore staging area. Large schools of juvenile grunts, a few fishes not seen in inlet (e.g., lane snapper, mutton snapper, black grouper, two-spot cardinalfish), and very few damselfishes and smaller wrasses characterized the artificial reefs. The fish species list is incorporated into the inlet drift dive list and is once again based upon my best recollection, confounded by distraction from crustacean antennae. I think that the species list could easily double at the artificial reefs. Most of the fishes seen during the day were offshore/lagoonal reef associates followed by inlet and grass flats associates. We never had opportunity to survey the large rock pile north of the small rock piles. It would be interesting to compare species associated with the two respective structure types considering the documented effects of pile size, configuration, and pile spacing.

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Printed on recycled paper.

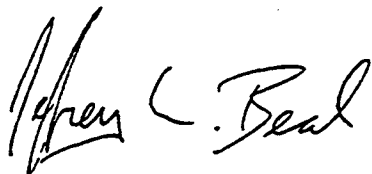
Please keep us informed about the latest decisions for Peanut Island. We would be glad to assist in the future. The natural resources are readily available for colonizing additional artificial reef placements along the southeast corner of the island, especially because the area is well flushed. I think that minus ten feet, as you mentioned, would do the job effectively. However, I think some of the larger fishes (jacks, barracuda, etc.) will be transient at best during the day unless you establish an attraction such as a fish cleaning station a la Sailfish Marina. As I mentioned earlier, I'm also extremely interested in the reconnection of the landlocked mangroves on the west side. We've recently purchased custom-made lift nets for a mangrove fish utilization study and have other gear types on hand. By the way, we finally got a look at Munyon Island and the marsh restoration looks fantastic (not to mention the adjacent seagrass beds to the south). Have you thought about contacting Florida Atlantic University Biology Department for slave labor? I imagine that a prospective grad student in need of a thesis could readily observe changes in the marsh over time via time-series analysis/BACI (using sedimentation/accretion/organics, influx of benthic and natant marsh associates, and so on) as the area assumes a more "natural" landscape.

I did some checking on your inquiry concerning limit of catch/take from the offshore reefs. Historically, the jurisdiction of state or federally owned uplands can be "extended" to include submerged, adjacent resources that are, in turn, afforded certain levels of protection (e.g., 400' perimeter around state parks, "no spearing" zones offshore of Hobe Sound Wildlife Refuge, and so on). I don't imagine that there are public uplands in the area in question in your county. The designation of "Marine Reserve" also affords protection, but the process is very tedious and I do not know if the desire for limited take alone is historically a sufficient factor. Recently, of the tens of square miles requested to be specially protected under the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, NMFS allowed only 9 square miles. User groups have a strong voice despite public support to preserve.

Special Management Zones designated by the South Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council offer protective measures such as gear restrictions. My suggestion would be to write to the directors of NMFS and South Atlantic MFC, making them aware of the public-led concern about overfishing and inquire about their protocol to achieve protective status. In the interim, I would also continue to pursue the public good faith effort to limit take. To my knowledge (and that of Jon Dodrill, FDEP Office of Fisheries Management), no formal, localized, self-policing effort of private citizens to limit take beyond state/federal law has been implemented in this state. Your county might break new ground and set a precedent for the environmental stewardship angle our department is advertising.

Thanks again for a great day of diving. We'll be in touch.

Sincerely,



Fish survey of rock fringe at southeast corner of Peanut Island-8/23/96

Trachinotus falcatus J
Lutjanus griseus A
Lutjanus apodus J/A
Haemulon spp. J
Haemulon parrai J/I
Haemulon plumerei I
Haemulon flavolineatum J/I/A
Anisotremus virginicus J/A
Diplodus agenteus J/A
Diplodus holbrooki J/A
Archosargus rhomboidalis A
Eucinostomus spp. J/A
Equetus acuminatus J
Kyphosus sp. A
Acanthurus chirurgus I/A
Abudefduf saxatilis J/A
Abudefduf taurus A
Stegastes planifrons J
Stegastes fuscus A
Halichoeres radiatus J
Halichoeres bivittatus SM
Scaridae sp. J
Labrisomus nuchipinnis J/A(M,F)
Scorpaena plumieri A

Fish surveys of *rock ledges of Lake Worth Inlet (north side) and **Artificial Reef structures north of Blue Heron Blvd. Bridge (no asterices denotes species seen at both locations)

***Dasyatis sabina* A (sand bottom between piles)

Centropomus undecimalis A

***Mycteroperca bonaci* J

**Serranus tigrinus* A

**Hypoplectrus indigo* A

***Hypoplectrus* spp. J

***Apogon pseudomaculatus* A

Lutjanus griseus J/A

***Lutjanus analis* A

***Lutjanus synagris* A

***Orthopristis chrysoptera* J

Haemulon spp. J/I

Haemulon parrai I

Haemulon plumerei A

Haemulon aurolineatum I

***Haemulon melanurum* I

Anisotremus virginicus J/A

Diplodus agenteus J/A

Diplodus holbrooki J/A

Archosargus probatocephalus J/A

Eucinostomus spp. J/A

***Equetus acuminatus* J/A

Kyphosus sp. A

**Acanthurus chirurgus* I/A

**Holocanthus bermudensis* A

**Holocanthus ciliaris* A

**Pomacanthus paru* J/A

Abudefduf saxatilis J/A

**Stegastes planifrons* A

**Stegastes fuscus* A

Stegastes spp. J

**Bodianus rufus* J

****Lachnolaimus maximus J/A**

Halichoeres radiatus J

Halichoeres bivittatus J/T

Halichoeres spp. J

Sparisoma viride I/T

Scaridae sp. J/I/A

Sphyraena barracuda A

Labrisomus nuchipinnis J/A(M,F)

Coryphopterus glaucofraenum A

***Aluterus scriptus A**

***Balistes vetula A**

Sphoeroides spengleri A

****Sphoeroides testudineus A**

****Diodon hystrix A**

Key:

J=juvenile

A=adult

I=intermediate

SM=supermale

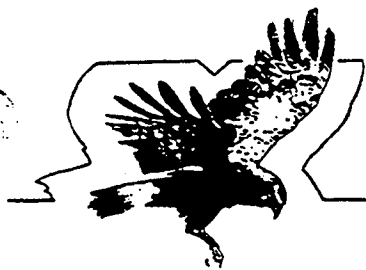
T=terminal phase

M=male

F=female

JUN 18 1998

ENV. RES. MGMT.
Env. Enh. & Restoration
Natural Areas Stewardship
Resources Protection
Mosquito Control
Administration
Director
Deputy Director
Other



AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES

P.O. BOX 16914, WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33416-6914 • PHONE: (407) 588-6908

June 15, 1998

Richard Walesky, Director
Environmental Resources Management
Palm Beach County

Re: Peanut Island Environmental Restoration

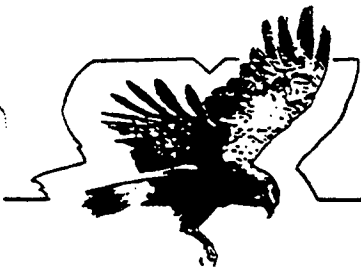
Dear Mr. Walesky,

In view of past, present, and future environmental assaults permitted by federal, state, and local agencies to Lake Worth Lagoon that resulted in degradation of water quality, a concerted effort is certainly warranted by all parties for corrective action.

The Peanut Island Environmental Restoration project qualifies as such an effort worthy of funding.

We do have an important concern that needs to be addressed. The Type and extent and management of recreational boating, that at times gets out of hand.

2.



AUDUBON SOCIETY

OF THE EVERGLADES

P.O. BOX 16914, WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33416-6914 • PHONE: (407) 588-6908

and needs regulations and enforcement.

Primarily if this project is a success, manatee will be attracted. There must be a regulatory commitment to ensure their safety.

Secondarily, to function as an estuarine area, netting and fishing must also be regulated to a degree.

Our organization certainly is in support of the environmental potential this project has to offer.

Sincerely,

Ron Durando, Conservator
Chair



PALM BEACH MARITIME MUSEUM

4512 Poinsettia Avenue, Suite 305 • West Palm Beach, Florida 33407
Mailing Address: P.O. Drawer 2317, Palm Beach, Florida 33480
(561) 842-8202 • Fax (561) 844-1636

10 June 1998

Mr. Richard E. Walesky, Director
Environmental Resources Management
Palm Beach County
3323 Belvedere Road, Bldg. #502
West Palm Beach, FL 33406-1548

ENV. RES. MGMT.
Director & Administration ☐
Regional Area Supervisors ☐
Environmental Protection ☐
Marine Coastal ☐
Administration ☐
Director ☐
Deputy Director ☐
Other ☐

RE: PEANUT ISLAND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROJECT

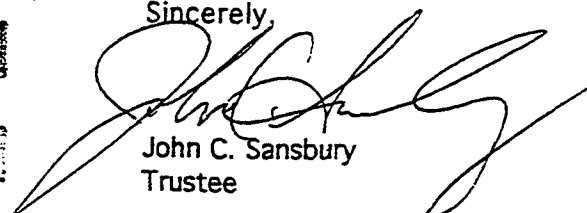
Dear Mr. Walesky:

As you know, the Palm Beach Maritime Museum, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) educational, not-for-profit Florida Corporation. The museum is the recipient of a number of Florida Inland Navigation District environmental education grants, one of which included funding of a CD-ROM program prepared by Harbor Branch, on the history of the Lake Worth Lagoon Estuary.

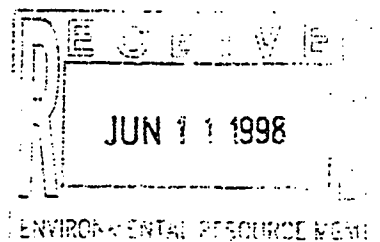
The museum also has a 45-year lease with the Port of Palm Beach on the 5-acre portion of Peanut Island that includes the 1936 Historic Coast Guard Station and Boathouse, as well as the Cold War Era President John F. Kennedy Bomb Shelter. The CD-ROM on the history of the Lake Worth Lagoon Estuary will be available for public viewing in the Boathouse once the museum officially opens on October 1, 1998.

The Palm Beach Maritime Museum fully supports the Peanut Island Environmental Restoration Project and encourages the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to enter into a partnership with Palm Beach County to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,


John C. Sansbury
Trustee

cc: John C. Grant, President, Palm Beach Maritime Museum, Inc.





Florida Chapter

June 9, 1998

Mr. Richard E. Walesky, Director
Environmental Resource Management
Palm Beach County
3323 Belvedere Road, Building 502
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406-1548

ENV. RES. MGMT.
Plan. Eval. & Coordination
Natural Areas Stewardship
Recreation Production
Resource Control
Administration
Director
Deputy Director
Other

Dear Mr. Walesky:

Thank you for the opportunity to review Palm Beach County's proposal for the environmental restoration of Peanut Island. After review of the information provided, The Nature Conservancy is supportive of this project and believes that it will have a positive impact on the environment and the citizens of the region.

After talking with staff, I understand that Peanut Island is currently being used by the boating public and I see no reason that the proposed restoration should adversely impact this type of use. It is always a challenge to balance the restoration and protection of habitats with recreational uses of an area. With proper planning, coordination and management these components can be compatible. Exotic removal will be a major need on Peanut Island and county staff has much experience in this work. This project will also provide a unique opportunity to educate visitors in the importance of such habitats and their responsibilities in helping protecting them. Palm Beach County staff have successfully managed sites with multiple uses and should be able to effectively implement a project such as Peanut Island.

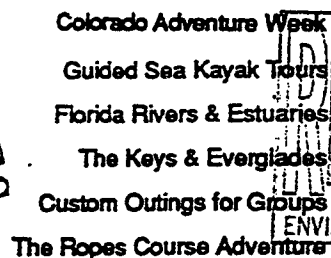
As you begin to implement the various phases of this project, please let me know if The Nature Conservancy can assist in any way.

Sincerely,


Jim Murrian

Director of Stewardship

JUN 12 1998



RECEIVED
JUN - 9 1998

SEA KAYAKS

Sales • Day Trips
Instruction • Accessories

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MGMT

521 Northlake Blvd. North Palm Beach, Florida 33408 (561) 881-7218

[illegible]

Dear Mr. Walesky:

The staff of Adventure Times Kayaks fully supports efforts by Palm Beach County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to restore and enhance Peanut Island. The proposed transformation of Peanut Island will benefit the local community in several ways, as well as the state of Florida on the whole.

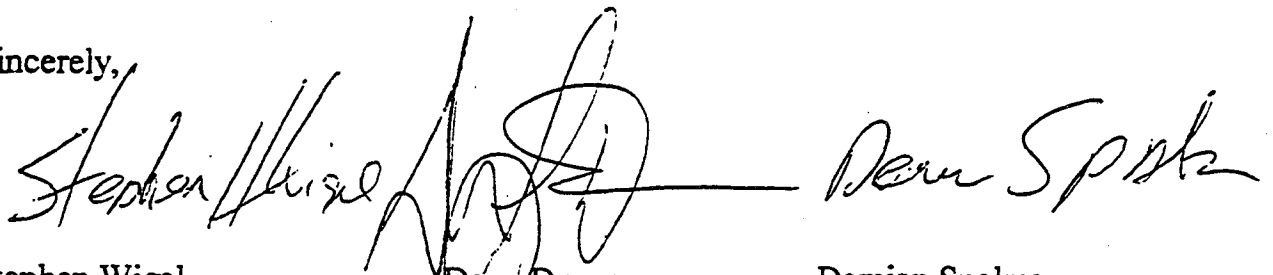
Adventure Times' staff feels privileged to have witnessed another restoration first-hand within the Lake Worth Lagoon, that of Munyon Island. Our visitors on trips to Munyon Island always come away awed, knowing they have experienced something special on the island.

Adventure Times' first and foremost concern is for the health and well being of our local environment. The potential to rebuild the area's depleted fisheries and wading bird populations through the creation and restoration of endangered ecosystems on and around Peanut Island is phenomenal. Peanut Island is a destination for many of our paddlers. It is always wonderful to hear the excitement in a clients voice upon their return as they describe a school of mullet or their first glimpse of a Great Blue heron, especially when the person lives in south Florida. Each day we at Adventure Times see how preserving our environment benefits the local economy.

Restorations like the one proposed for Peanut Island are extremely beneficial to the tourism industry. Increased fish populations mean more fishermen and divers will choose Palm Beach County for their vacation destination. Eco-tourists will visit a restored Peanut Island to add birds like the roseate spoonbill to their life-lists. Everything is cyclical; restoring the environment brings in visitors who go home with a greater appreciation for the natural world which will aid in gaining support for future restoration projects here and in other parts of the world.

Peanut Island is a unique local resource. This proposed project will tangibly enhance its importance to our community. Adventure Times is very excited about the project and the prospect of an environmentally sound future for Peanut Island and the Lake Worth Lagoon. Please contact us if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Three handwritten signatures are shown in a row. The first signature is for Stephen Wigal, the middle for Dana Duncan, and the right for Damian Spalma. They are all in cursive script.

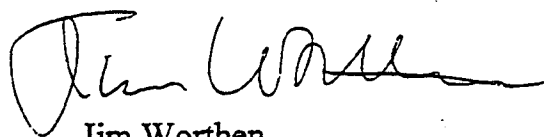
Stephen Wigal

Dana Duncan

Damian Spalma

A handwritten signature in cursive script for Kenny Sturgeon.

Kenny Sturgeon

A handwritten signature in cursive script for Jim Worthen.

Jim Worthen

The Ocean Impact Foundation Marine-Wildlife Care Center

7100 Belvedere Road • West Palm Beach, Florida 33411

(407) 471-3403

ENV. RES. MGMT. ☒
Env. Enh. & Restoration ☐
Natural Areas Stewardship ☐
Resources Protection ☐
Mosquito Control ☐
Administration ☐
Director ☐
Deputy Director ☐
Other ☐

June 4, 1998

Richard Walesky
Palm Beach County Environmental Resources Management
3323 Belvedere Road
Building 502
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406

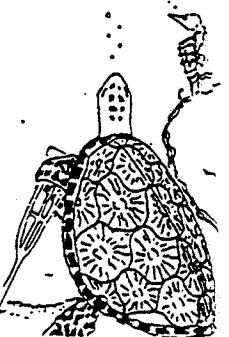
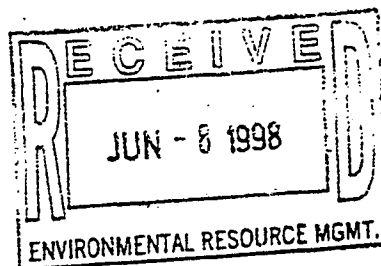
Dear Mr. Walesky:

On behalf of the staff and volunteers of OIF's Marine-Wildlife Care Center, I would like to express our support and continued encouragement to your office and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the Peanut Island Restoration project. We are very excited that Palm Beach County is undertaking a project that will have such a beneficial effect on our wildlife and water quality.

As you are aware, OIF operates Palm Beach County's only hospital for native Florida wildlife. It is especially encouraging to know that this project will create additional habitats for marine species. We continue to support your work to restore our resources that have been depleted and applaud your efforts.

Cordially,


Dianne Mercer Sauve
Executive Director



Coalition For Wilderness Islands



"These are islands in time -- with nothing to date them on the calendar of mankind. In these areas it is as if a person were looking backward into the ages and forward untold years. Here are bits of eternity, which have a preciousness beyond all accounting."

Harvey Broome, 1948

June 10, 1998

Richard E. Walesky, Director
Department of Environmental Resources Management
3323 Belvedere Road, Building 502
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406-1548

Subject: Peanut Island Restoration

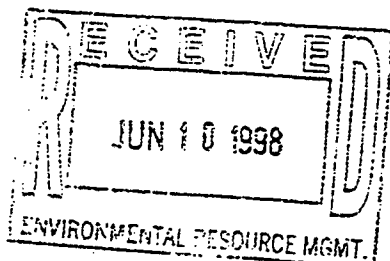
The Coalition for Wilderness Islands, an environmental coalition for eco-system preservation, was founded in 1983. We successfully spearheaded the drive for a bond issue to purchase many of the remaining sensitive lands in Palm Beach County.

As our population grows, our natural resources dwindle from the pressures that follow. It is vital that we make every effort to expand and enhance these resources by the restoration of habitats such as Peanut Island.

We lend our support to this project.

Sincerely,

Stella Rossi, Chair





**Department of
Environmental Protection**

Lawton Chiles
Governor

Southeast District
P.O. Box 15425
West Palm Beach, Florida 33416

Env. Mgmt. Admin.	
Env. Fin. & Administration	
Nature Area Stewardship	Virginia B. Wetherell
Resource Protection	Secretary
Musqueto Control	
Administration	
Director	
Deputy Director	
Other	

JUN - 4 1998

Richard Walesky, Director
Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management
3323 Belvedere Road, Bldg. 502
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

RE: Peanut Island Environmental Restoration

Dear Mr. Walesky:

On behalf of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Lake Worth Lagoon Steering Committee, I would like to indicate my support for the Peanut Island Restoration Project. Because Peanut Island is located in the heart of the Lake Worth Lagoon Estuary, this project is a critical component of the plan to restore and enhance the Lake Worth Lagoon. We applaud Palm Beach County's effort to form a partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a means to accomplish this end.

Restoration and creation of shallow water reef, mangrove, maritime hammock and transitional habitats in and around Peanut Island will have numerous benefits for fisheries and wildlife, water quality and the residents and visitors of Palm Beach County. At the same time, the island will not lose its function as a spoil disposal site.

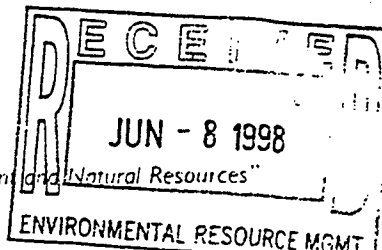
The Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Lake Worth Lagoon Steering Committee strongly support the Peanut Island Restoration. If there is anything else I can do to assist your effort, please call me at 561/681-6661.

Sincerely,

Carlos R. deAguiar 6/3/98
Date
Director of District Management
Co-Chair Lake Worth Lagoon Steering Committee

CRA/AM/GP *GP*

cc: Ginny Powell, FDEP





ENV. DEPT. RECORD
DATE: 6/11/98
TIME: 10:00 AM
LOCATION: 3323 BELVEDERE RD.
PROJECT: PEANUT ISLAND RESTORATION
SUBJECT: LETTER TO DIRECTOR
BY: CHRIS DOYLE
FOR: RICHARD E. WALESKY
DUPED: 1
OTHER: _____

June 11, 1998

Mr. Richard E. Walesky, Director
Environmental Resources Management
3323 Belvedere Rd. Bldg 502
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Dear Mr. Walesky,

We are writing this letter in support of the Peanut Island Environmental Restoration Project. We feel that this project will benefit Palm Beach County, by providing a natural recreation area, which will be enjoyed by the public. The restoration of this island will help to restore and create new habitats for our local fisheries and wildlife. It will also benefit the overall water quality of the Lake Worth Lagoon and inlet area. The island will provide more opportunities for environmental education and a safe site for field studies comparing the past, present and future of this island habitat. The island will continue to be a favorite recreation area for the residents and visitors of Palm Beach County, and draw even more attention due to the new amenities, which will be enjoyed upon completion of the project. We believe that this project can only be beneficial to the County by providing the above named items, and making Peanut Island an important key player in a cleaner and healthier estuarine environment.

Sincerely,

Chris Doyle

Chris Doyle, President
Gidget Greco, Manager
Water Taxi of the Palm Beaches

JUN 15 1998

at Panama Hattie's Restaurant
11511 Ellison Wilson Road • North Palm Beach, Florida 33408
Phone (561) 624-3893 • Fax (561) 627-3943 • Pager (561) 837-4550

